



BRAD SANDERS



Entertainment Guide

by Allen Jones

Brad Sanders, a 28-year-old Black stand-up comedian, had no problem identifying with the character he portrays in Hanna-Barbera's "The Roast," an hour-long comedy special airing on NBC-TV, at 8:00 p.m., Thursday, January 25th.

He portrays Ghetto Man, the first Black superhero, a role especially created for him by the show's writers, Mike Marmer and Peter Gally.

The promising and struggling young satirist, who usually writes his own material, is teamed with a number of established actors and comedians in what producer-director William Carruthers contends will be television's first fantasy roast in which famous comic book superheroes are roasted by infamous comic book villains.

Having spent his childhood growing up in a government housing project in Chicago's westside, Sanders has been earning a living as a stand-up comic since he was nineteen years old. "I didn't earn enough to spoil me, but I did make enough to prove to myself that I could eke-out a living making people laugh."

Before moving to Hollywood two years ago, he had spent most of his career working the predominately Black "smokehole circuit" of the night-clubs in Chicago's Southside.

"They were the kind of clubs where you had to step over the crap game to get to the bar," recalls Sanders. "You knew you were bombing out when they started playing the juke box in the middle of your routine."

In Chicago, the Columbia College graduate supplemented his income selling shoes, hardware and life insurance. "Finally, I had to decide what to do with my life," muses Sanders. "Should I become a successful businessman with flashy wheels, tailored threads and plush pad? Or should I keep struggling as Mister Funny?"

Comedy won out and Sanders, a bachelor, moved to California to establish his own ghetto in Hollywood.

Although the funny business is rapidly improving for Brad, he has not yet made millionaire status. He lives in a small, one-room apartment across the street from the Hollywood Cemetery, still uses his thumb for transportation, and occasionally reverts to his "survival kit," a shelf stocked with the nutritional necessities to sustain life — bread, peanut butter, jelly, beans and rice.

But good things are happening. Besides the Hanna-Barbera comedy special, which features him along with Batman (Adam West), Robin (Burt Ward), Retired Man (William Schallert) and a number of well-known villains, he's had several national TV breaks. He's doing voice-over commercials and has performed in a variety of night-clubs.

"Humor has no race distinction," observes Sanders, whose night-club audiences range from Black to white. "If your material's funny, it's going to be funny. If it's not, forget it."

Repertory Theater presents Wine

by Evelyn Cruse

Despite the severity of the weather the Albina Women's League lights were burning after regular office hours. Six people were seated around a table in the outer room chatting about the cold and if it would deter the leading lady's arrival. All but one were familiar with the unpredictable weather outside and two of the cast took this time to acquaint her to the changeable attitudes of Portland skies. They were waiting for Tommy or Deborah Hicks; Tommy being her name in the play. She arrives, with accompaniment, smiling and jabbering excuses which included the problems of finding sitters and of course, how cold it was outside. Oldtimer; played by Otto Rutherford grunts a little. "We're all here. We can begin." The director's motions everyone to the small auditorium and they begin.

The Black Repertory Theater is in rehearsal, creating "Wine In The Wilderness." All the cast are local residents who are not unfamiliar with the first few weeks of rehearsals. Portland Black Repertory Theater (PBRT) has brought to the stage such plays as "Five on the Black Hand Side," "River Niger," "Stardust," "Raisin in the Sun" and now, "Wine In The Wilderness." "Wine In The Wilderness" is a one-act comedy-drama written by Black playwright Alice Childress (Chilldress). The small cast of five features: Otto Rutherford, Deborah Hicks, Al Jamison, Vanessa Jobe and Marvin Johnson. The play was first presented by television station WGBH in Boston, Massachusetts, on March 4, 1969, as the first play in a series "On Being Black" under a Ford Foundation Grant.

The reading goes on. Oldtimer (Otto Rutherford) is obviously best at his lines. Then — he was a member of the Portland Civic Theater cast in its early days from 1952-1960. One thing is very different now, he is not a lone Black actor in a cast who's repertoire has all but nil parts for actors of color.

As they read through parts, the actors seem to become the characters. The ages are right. The time in which the play is set (early 60's Harlem, New York) can be remembered by the actors themselves. The reading goes well and Al Jamison seems perfect as Bill Jameson, an artist who is completing a triptych (trip-tick). A

triptych is three paintings on one subject, and Bill's subject is Black Womanhood. Al Jamison is no stranger to theater. He is the founder of the Kansas City Black Contemporary Players and he directed the company for four years. His outburst of laughter after Deborah Hicks so aptly reads one of Tommy's lines directed toward Oldtimer, seems to reflect his inner thoughts; that not only are Ms. Childress' characters alive in theater, but Deborah and Otto know a Tommy and an Oldtimer who exist in real life.

Ms. Deborah Hicks (Tommy) made her theater debut in the PSU Black Cultural Affairs production of "A Raisin In The Sun". Ms. Hicks is a professional model.

Cynthia played by Ms. Vanessa Jobe is new in Portland, from Nashville, Tennessee. She plays the guitar, piano and is a violinist with the String Ensemble Quartet. Ms. Jobe studied Speech and Drama at Tennessee State University where she appeared in "Up the Down Staircase."

Marvin Johnson (Sonny-Man) born in Detroit, Michigan, has lived in Portland for fifteen years. He attended Grant High School and studied Business Administration at the University of Oregon. He is just beginning to explore his creative talents; this is his first production. Mr. Johnson finds theater a personal challenge.

"Wine In The Wilderness" is produced and directed by Portland actress/director, Rosemary Allen. Ms. Allen has nurtured the concept of bringing together the Portland Black Repertory Theater since producing and directing "Five On The Black Hand Side" at Portland State University through the Black Cultural Affairs Board. Presenting plays of "Wine In The Wilderness" caliber is not new to Ms. Allen. Cold weather or not the Portland Black Repertory Theater's presentation of Alice Childress' "Wine In The Wilderness" will be worth seeing.

The performances will be presented January 26th through February 10th at 1708 N.E. Alberta, 8:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday's at the Royal Esquire Club. Tickets can be purchased in advance at the Albina Women's League and at the door for \$2, \$3.50, and \$5.00. Seating is limited, and reservations can be made at 281-0457.

Seniors study Legislature

The City of Portland/Multnomah County Area Agency on Aging is sponsoring Legislative training workshops in four geographic areas of the City/County during the month of January. Each of these workshops will have the legislators from that area participating as trainers.

Senior citizens interested in attending should call 248-4752.

The workshops will feature training as well as intense question and answer periods which will allow Seniors direct information from elec-

ed officials and community organizers on how to not only follow legislation but also how to lobby effectively on their own behalf.

The North District meeting will be held on January 27th at the Memorial Coliseum. Panel members will be: Representatives Jim Chrest, Howard Cherry, George Starr, and Jane Cease; and Senator Frank Roberts. Registration beings at 9:00 and the workshops run from 9:30 until noon.

Obituary

Curley Massey, Sr. died at the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center Hospital on January 7th. He was born in Point, Texas on November 27, 1912.

He had lived in Portland since 1944 and retired in 1974 after eight years employment as a draftsman for the Bonneville Power Administration.

He operated a grocery business in Portland for twenty years.

Survivors include his wife, Mary J. Massey, and six children — Hazel Sibley, Curley, Jr., Helen Bennett, and Jimmy L. of Portland; Joe L. of Vancouver and Donnie of Seattle. Also, two sisters — Ernestine Ivory of Portland and Althea Riley of

Palm Springs, California — nineteen grandchildren, 25 great grandchildren.

The funeral was held at Mt. Calvary Church of God in Christ on January 12th, with burial at Rose City Cemetery. Colonial Mortuary officiated.

Ushers meet

The Union Ushers of Portland will have a call meeting on Sunday, January 21st, 4:00 p.m. at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, 3138 N. Vancouver. All Union Ushers are asked to please attend.

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